

What is claimed is:

1. A content recording/reproducing apparatus for controlling the recording and reproducing of content limited in viewable period, comprising:

content recording means for recording content received from the outside;

determination means for determining a viewable period of the recorded content;

presentation means for presenting information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content;

content reproduction means for reproducing said recorded content; and

reproduction control means for controlling a reproducing operation of said content reproduction means in accordance with said viewable period of said recorded content.

2. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said determination means determines said viewable period of content on the basis of a recording retention period unique to each content.

3. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said determination means determines said viewable period of content on the basis

of a period of time from at least one of a point of time at which the distribution of said content is started and a point of time at which at least one of the reception and recording of said content is started by said content recording means to a point of time at which said recording retention period given to said content passes.

4. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said determination means determines said viewable period of content on the basis of a period of time from a point of time at which the reproduction of said content is first started by said content reproduction means to a point of time at which said recording retention period given to said content passes.

5. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said presentation means presents said information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content by superimposing said information on a reproduction signal of said content generated by said content reproduction means.

6. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said presentation means presents said information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content through an output device

different from a reproduction output device of said content.

7. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said presentation means transmits said information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content to a predetermined communication path.

8. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said reproduction control means prohibits the reproduction of the content of which viewable period has passed, by said content reproduction means.

9. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

control input means for accepting user command input;

wherein, in response to an instruction for moving a content viewing start position through said control input means, said reproduction control means instructs said content reproduction means to move a content viewing position and said presentation means presents information associated with the viewable period of the reproduced content.

10. The content recording/reproducing apparatus

according to claim 1, further comprising:

control input means for accepting user command input;

wherein, in response to an instruction for clearing a viewing pause operation through said control input means, said presentation means presents said information associated with said viewable period of said content, and if said viewable period of said content has not been passed, said reproduction control means instructs said content reproduction means to start reproducing said content.

11. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, in response to the expiration of said viewable period of content in a viewing paused state, said reproduction control means starts reproducing said content in the viewing paused state regardless of a user instruction for clearing said viewing paused state.

12. The content recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, in response to the expiration of said viewable period of content in a viewing paused state, said reproduction control means starts reproducing said content in the viewing paused state regardless of a user instruction for clearing said

viewing paused state and

said presentation means presents an elapsed time from the start of the reproduction of said content and/or information indicative of the expiration of said viewable period.

13. A content recording/reproducing method for controlling the recording and reproduction of content limited in viewable period, comprising the steps of:

recording content received from the outside;

determining a viewable period of the recorded content;

presenting information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content; and

reproducing said recorded content in accordance with a relationship between a recording retention period of said recorded content and a current time.

14. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in said determination step, said viewable period of content is determined on the basis of a recording retention period unique to each content.

15. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 14, wherein, in said determination step, said viewable period of content is determined on

the basis of a period of time from at least one of a point of time at which the distribution of said content is started and a point of time at which at least one of the reception and recording of said content is started in said content recording step to a point of time at which said recording retention period given to said content passes.

16. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 14, wherein, in said determination step, said viewable period of content is determined on the basis of a period of time from a point of time at which the reproduction of said content is first started in said content reproduction step to a point of time at which said recording retention period given to said content passes.

17. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in said presentation step, said information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content is presented by superimposing said information on a reproduction signal of said content.

18. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in said presentation step, said information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content is presented through an output

device different from a reproduction output device of said content.

19. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in said presentation step, said information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content is transmitted to a predetermined communication path.

20. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in said reproduction control step, the reproduction of the content of which viewable period has passed is prohibited.

21. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in response to an instruction for moving a content viewing start position from a user, a content viewing position is moved in said content reproduction step, and information associated with the viewable period of the reproduced content is presented in said presentation step.

22. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in response to an instruction for clearing a viewing pause operation from a user, said information associated with said viewable period of said content is presented in said presentation step, and if said viewable period of said content has not

been passed, said content is reproduced in said content reproduction step.

23. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in response to the expiration of said viewable period of content in a viewing paused state, the reproduction of said content in the viewing paused state is started in said content reproduction step regardless of a user instruction for clearing said viewing paused state.

24. The content recording/reproducing method according to claim 13, wherein, in response to the expiration of said viewable period of content in a viewing paused state, the reproduction of said content in the viewing paused state is started in said content reproduction step regardless of a user instruction for clearing said viewing paused state and

an elapsed time from the start of the reproduction of said content and/or information indicative of the expiration of said viewable period is presented in said presentation step.

25. A storage medium physically storing computer software in a computer-readable format, said computer software being written so as to execute, on a computer system, control of recording and reproducing operations



of content limited in viewable period, said computer software comprising the steps of:

- recording content received from the outside;
- determining a viewable period of the recorded content;

- presenting information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content; and

- reproducing said recorded content in accordance with a relationship between a recording retention period of said recorded content and a current time.

26. A computer program written so as to execute, on a computer system, control of recording and reproducing operations of content limited in viewable period, said computer program comprising the steps of:

- recording content received from the outside;
- determining a viewable period of the recorded content;

- presenting information associated with said viewable period of said recorded content; and

- reproducing said recorded content in accordance with a relationship between a recording retention period of said recorded content and a current time.